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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/727,002	12/03/2003	Andreas Heil	TRW(ASG)6874	4504

7590 12/16/2005
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EXAMINER

BROWN, DREW J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

DATE MAILED: 12/16/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/727,002	Applicant(s) HEIL ET AL.	
	Examiner Drew J. Brown	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/11/04 & 1/22/04</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: In lines 6 and 7 of page 4, "ring-shaped chamber 27" should be changed to --ring-shaped chamber 29--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by Hühne et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,942,246 B2) in view of Burdock (U.S. Pat. No. 6,550,804 B2).

With respect to claim 1, Hühne et al. discloses a gas bag module (Figure 4) which has a gas bag (39) and a covering cap (33) that tears open (Abstract, lines 14-19) on inflation of the gas bag. The covering cap covers a ring-shaped outlet opening (opening covered by second wall 33) for the gas bag and has a central section (32), which in an opened state of the gas bag module is surrounded by the outlet opening (Figure 1). The central section is delimited by a ring-shaped, peripherally closed edge area (31) of radially outwardly adjoining sections of the covering cap, where the edge area adjoins an inner edge of the outlet opening (column 6, lines 8-14 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 1, although Hühne et al. discloses in the Abstract that the edge area (31) can tear to deploy the airbag, it does not specifically disclose that the edge area tears by the use of a tear line. However, Burdock does disclose that the tearing of the airbag occurs through the use of a tear line (158 and column 5, lines 7-20). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have a tear line in the central section of the airbag in order to facilitate opening and prevent fragmentation.

With respect to claim 2, Burdock discloses that the tear line defines the inner edge of the outlet opening (column 6, lines 8-14 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 3, Hühne et al. discloses that the central section is constructed so as to be rigid (column 5, lines 28-33).

With respect to claim 4, Hühne et al. discloses that the central section is at least partially covered externally by a separate plaque piece (29 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 5, Burdock discloses that the tear line immediately adjoins an outer edge of the plaque piece (column 6, lines 8-14 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 6, Hühne et al. discloses that the plaque piece fastens the central section and prevents it from a free movement as the covering cap is opening (column 6, lines 4-14 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 7, Hühne et al. discloses that the plaque piece has a depression (30) at its rear side, in which a bead-like extension (31) of the central section projects.

With respect to claim 8, Hühne et al. discloses that the central section has a mounting opening (30), for the plaque piece and can be placed from above onto the plaque piece such that

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an inner edge of the central section snaps in place underneath a laterally projecting edge of the plaque piece (column 5, lines 66-67 and column 6, lines 1-4).

3. Claims 1, 4, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by Hühne et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,942,246 B2) in view of Burdock (U.S. Pat. No. 6,550,804 B2).

With respect to claim 1, Hühne et al. discloses a gas bag module (**Figure 3**) which has a gas bag (28) and a covering cap (24) that tears open (Abstract, lines 14-19) on inflation of the gas bag. The covering cap covers a ring-shaped outlet opening (opening covered by second wall 24) for the gas bag and has a central section (18), which in an opened state of the gas bag module is surrounded by the outlet opening (Figure 1). The central section is delimited by a ring-shaped, peripherally closed edge area (23) of radially outwardly adjoining sections of the covering cap, where the edge area adjoins an inner edge of the outlet opening (column 5, lines 57-65 and Figure 3).

With respect to claim 1, although Hühne et al. discloses in the Abstract that the edge area (23) can tear to deploy the airbag, it does not specifically disclose that the edge area tears by the use of a tear line. However, Burdock does disclose that the tearing of the airbag occurs through the use of a tear line (158 and column 5, lines 7-20). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have a tear line in the central section of the airbag in order to facilitate opening and prevent fragmentation.

With respect to claim 4, Hühne et al. discloses that the central section is at least partially covered externally by a separate plaque piece (21 and Figure 4).

With respect to claim 9, Hühne et al. discloses that the covering cap adjoins the plaque piece externally in a substantially flush manner (Figure 3).

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Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Lorenz et al., Frisch, Keutz, Derrick, Neupert, Braunschadel, Bohn et al., and Ford et al. disclose similar gas bag modules with a ring-shaped outlet opening.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew J. Brown whose telephone number is 571-272-1362. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul N. Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Drew J Brown
Examiner
Art Unit 3616

DJB


PAUL N. DICKSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600